

REMARKS

Claim 1 has been amended. Support for this amendment can be found, for example, in claims 5 and 6 and on page 4, line 23 of the specification.

Claims 5 and 6 have been canceled.

The dependency of claim 7 has been amended.

Upon entry of the Amendment, claims 1-7 and 11-13 will be pending.

Claims 1-7 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated based on Sakura et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,905,993 (“Sakura”).

The Examiner asserts that Sakura discloses stabilized zirconia ceramics of the claimed invention in Examples 4, 6, 8, 11, 12, 13, 16 and 17.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Applicants' zirconia sintered body has an average grain size of from 0.01 to 0.2 μm and a density of the claimed zirconia sintered body is 6 g/cm^3 or more. Sakura does not disclose or suggest a zirconia ceramic with Applicants' claimed average grain size or density. See for example the table provided below.

	$\text{Y}_2\text{O}_3/\text{ZrO}_2$ molar Ratio	Al_2O_3	Grain size	Bulk Density
		wt%	μm	g/cm^3
Present Invention		<0.5	0.01-0.2	>6
Ex. 4	2.7/97.3	0.38	0.25	5.95
Ex. 6	2.8/97.2	0.40	0.21	5.80
Ex. 8	3.2/96.8	0.26	0.33	6.03
Ex. 11	2.6/97.4	0.08	0.23	5.94
Ex. 12	3.0/97.0	0.26	0.21	5.90
Ex. 13	2.8/97.2	0.26	0.28	6.02
Ex. 16	2.4/97.6	0.26	0.18	5.90
Ex. 17	3.0/97.0	0.45	0.29	6.01

* See Table 1

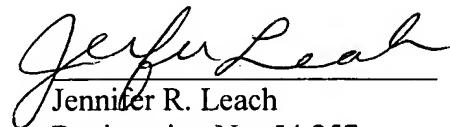
In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that claims 1-7 are not anticipated or rendered obvious based on Sakura. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Appln. No.: 10/785,084
Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



Jennifer R. Leach
Registration No. 54,257

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE
23373
CUSTOMER NUMBER

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